



DATE: March 28, 2008

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ADEQ Director Owens Announces New Rules on Off-Highway Vehicles, Leaf Blowers in Phoenix Area to Take Effect Soon

PHOENIX (March 28, 2008) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Director Steve Owens announced today that new limits on the use of leaf blowers and Off-Highway Vehicles will take effect during early April.

The new regulations are being issued according to the provisions of Senate Bill 1552, which Gov. Janet Napolitano signed into law last July.

Under the new law, as of April 1 the use of leaf blowers to blow debris into a street, or to use a blower on dirt fields, road shoulders or loose dirt is prohibited. ADEQ is publishing training materials for leaf-blower operators, which is part of mandatory training for operators employed by counties and municipalities. In addition, the law requires sellers or renters of leaf blowers to distribute an informational leaflet produced by ADEQ about the new law: www.azdeq.gov/environ/air/blower.html

In addition, effective April 8, cities and counties in the Phoenix metropolitan area are required to limit the recreational use of Off-Highway Vehicles on days when a High Pollution Advisory (HPA) is in effect and to restrict parking and use of all vehicles on unpaved or unstabilized vacant lots, except when a dust-control permit has been issued. A map of areas affected: <http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/air/prevent/images/ohv.jpg>

Director Owens noted that Gov. Napolitano has banned the use of leaf blowers and other gasoline-powered landscape maintenance equipment on state property in Maricopa, Pima and Pinal counties since last June.

The new limits will help to bring Arizona into compliance with federal particulate-matter air quality standards by 2010, Owens said.

“We have made progress reducing automobile emissions, but dust generated by off-road sources remains a major source of air pollution,” Owens said. “With the new restrictions, people who use leaf blowers and Off-Highway Vehicles will be doing their part to help make the air cleaner and healthier to breathe.”

In addition, the public can sign up to receive HPA alerts by text message or email: www.azdeq.gov/sms.html or www.azdeq.gov/subscribe.html.